

A Look at our Community Preservation Adoption

Twelve years ago, in May of 2001, our town of Westford voted to adopt CPA legislation in the amount of an annual 3% surcharge on homeowners. The purpose of this was to assist our municipality in its effort to support the areas of open space, affordable housing, recreation and historic preservation. Exemptions built into our local law include low income and no taxation for the first \$100,000 of the value of any home.

The Community Preservation Act also creates a statewide Community Preservation Trust Fund, administered by the Department of Revenue, which provides distributions to communities that have adopted CPA. Initially 34 communities adopted this law and as of 2012 the number has increased to 148 (out of a total of 351 communities). The first six years of this program brought Westford a 100% match rate. The numbers of communities that have adopted CPA along with the slowing economy have caused the CPA revenues to decline. At the present time Westford's 2013 rate is 29.66%. The total Trust Fund distributions from the state to date for Westford have been \$8,697,342.

Westford voters, at Town Meeting since 2001, have supported 66 projects. The categories are 32 for historic, 17 for housing, 15 for open space and 7 for recreation.

The historic projects have included all or pieces of Town Records Preservation, Roudenbush Community Center, an archeological town wide assessment, the Cameron Senior Center, J. V. Fletcher Library, First Parish Church United, Preservation of Historic Grave Markers, Forge Millworkers Path Project, Westford Museum, Historic Preservation Planning Support, North Main Street Retaining Wall Study, Sargent School, Town Farm Building, Town Hall and Frost School.

The open space projects have included the purchase of the East Boston Camps parcel, the assistance towards the purchase of the Genova Parcel, funding some design costs of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, support for the Conservation

Trust Fund, Nabnasset Lake Invasive Weed Control, Nutting Road Fields, Stepinski parcel, assistance towards purchase of the Conservation Restriction at the O'Brien Farm.

The recreation projects have included purchase of the portion of East Boston Camps used for recreation, the Nutting Road Fields, Ronan McElligot Playground for easy access for wheelchairs and children with disabilities.

Lastly, the affordable housing projects have included the Carlisle Road Veterans Housing, support for the Affordable Housing Trust, Buy Down Program for the cost of existing affordable units, Potential Group Home, Special Housing, the Stony Brook residences, Tadmuck Road Senior Housing.

Applications for Westford Community Preservation Funds may be obtained by emailing odonnell@westfordma.gov. The Community Preservation Committee holds a Town wide Needs Assessment Hearing in December which is open to the public to hear specific and general needs for the town. The Committee reviews application packages in January and February. Applicants appear before the committee for interviews and to provide information as needed. Recommendations are made in February. Applications are presented to the Selectmen and Finance Committee for their recommendations by both the applicant and a CPC representative. The recommendations of the CPC Committee are placed on the warrant for the March Town Meeting for the Westford voters' consideration. If an applicant wishes to submit an application outside the Annual Town Meeting timeframe please contact the CPC Administrative Support Person, Dan O'Donnell.